

Organizational identification and organizational commitment: Distinct aspects of two related concepts

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The conceptual differences between organizational commitment and identification are discussed theoretically and examined empirically. The present study is based on data of 450 employees of five different organizations in Nepal. A revised eight-item scale was designed out of Cheney's Organizational Identification Questionnaire to assess the core aspects of organizational identification. In confirmatory factor analyses, identification was found to be distinguishable from four related commitment concepts (i.e. affective, continuance, normative, and attitudinal commitment).

Key words: affective, attitudinal commitment, continuance, normative commitment, organizational identification, social identity.

Introduction

The aim of the present article is twofold. The general purpose is to define conceptual differences between organizational identification and organizational commitment and to test the empirical distinctiveness of these concepts in a large sample of employees in Nepal. To reach this aim, the second purpose is to construct a short version out of the 25-item version of the Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ; Cheney, 1982, 1983).

The concepts of identification and commitment have been of considerable importance in organizational research during the past 25 years. Both concepts are related to attitudes of

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employees towards their organization. Cheney's (1982) Organizational Identification Questionnaire was the first operationalization of the organizational identification concept that paved the way for new conceptualizations of this concept based on the Social Identity Approach (cf. Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Pratt, 1998; Van Dick, 2001, 2004).

Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) differentiated organizational commitment into three components: Affective Commitment (AC), Continuance Commitment (CC), and Normative Commitment (NC), which are derived from earlier research that has previously been reviewed elsewhere (e.g. Gautam *et al.*, 2001; Van Dick, 2001, 2004). The concept of affective commitment was derived from the concept of organizational commitment by Porter *et al.* (1974) and has been referred to as 'attitudinal commitment' by other researchers (cf. Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1997). An influential operationalization of the attitudinal commitment concept was made in the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Porter *et al.*, 1974).

The validity of a widely used measure of organizational identification, the OIQ, has become subject to considerable criticism because of the large overlap with a commonly used attitudinal commitment measure, the OCQ (Sass & Canary, 1991; Miller *et al.*, 1994). Although different researchers have argued for a reformulation of the OIQ to separate it from commitment scales (Sass & Canary, 1991; Miller *et al.*, 2000), it is still a widely used instrument, albeit in slightly adapted versions (Scott, 1997; Scott *et al.*, 1999). Thus, it seems to be a timely and fruitful attempt to differentiate between OIQ, attitudinal OCQ and the three components of organizational commitment as presented by Meyer and Allen (1997).

Before presenting the empirical study, the theoretical concepts used in our analysis shall be described in more detail.

Organizational identification

Organizational identification is a specific form of social identification. Freud's (1922) narrow meaning of identification as 'an emotional tie with another person' was coined by Lasswell (1965) in a broader sense that focused largely on mass identifications such as nationalism. Later on, the term was adapted for organizational identification (Patchen, 1970). Patchen's identification theory consisted of three components: similarity, membership, and loyalty, which led to the development of Cheney's (1983) Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ). According to Tompkins and Cheney (1983, p. 144), organizational identification occurs 'when, in making a decision, the person in one or more of his or her organizational roles perceives that unit's values or interests as relevant in evaluating the alternatives of choice'. Following Patchen's (1970) conceptualization, Cheney (1982) composed his OIQ using items to measure the following dimensions: (i) feelings of attachment, belonging, and pride in being an organizational member; (ii) loyalty to the organization and support of the organization's goals; and (iii) perceived similarity between employees and the organization in terms of shared values and goals. However, after the advent of Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and Self-Categorization Theory (Turner *et al.*, 1987), new theoretical arguments have been developed (cf. Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Van Knippenberg, 2000; Van Dick, 2001) that specified the conceptualization of social identification.

Tajfel (1978) defines social identity as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his or her membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership' (p. 63). Accordingly, three dimensions of social identity can be distinguished: (1) a cognitive component, which is the knowledge of being a member of a certain group; (2) an affective dimension, which is the emotional attachment to that group; and (3) an evaluative aspect, which describes the value connotation assigned to that group from outside. Other researchers have added a fourth component, which represents the behavioral

aspect of identification (Phinney, 1991; cf. Van Dick, 2001, 2004; Jackson, 2002). Van Dick *et al.* (2004) have recently provided evidence for the usefulness of the consideration of these dimensions of identification in organizational contexts. Ashforth and Mael (1989) did some pioneering work on transferring the ideas of Social Identity Theory into organizational identification that will not be repeated here in detail. An organization, team or work group can represent a social category with which individuals can identify themselves. According to Hogg and Terry (2000), an organization is one of the most important social categories for an individual (cf. Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Employees who identify with their organization have self-images that are reconstituted in the organization's image and values (Cheney, 1983). O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) characterized identification as involvement based on the desire for affiliation. Ashforth and Mael's (1989) approach to organizational identification deals with the perceived oneness of an employee with his or her organization. The more individuals identify themselves with their organization, the more they think and act from an organization's perspective (cf. Dutton *et al.*, 1994). Albert *et al.* (2000) have recently summarized why identity and identification are timely and important aspects of organizational life. Although rapid changes – both on a macro and micro level – such as downsizing, change from long-term contracts to shorter transactions, outsourcing and so forth, suggest a decrease in the relevance of identity matters, Albert and colleagues provide several arguments for the powerfulness of organizational identification. Part of this powerfulness stems from an inherent need for a situated sense of an entity. 'Whether an organization, a group, or person, each entity needs at least a preliminary answer to the question "Who we are?" or "Who am I" in order to interact effectively with other entities' (Albert *et al.*, 2000; p. 13). In a similar vein, Gioia *et al.*, 2000) argue that it is the flexibility and instability of the representations of the organization's identity in the employees' minds which contributes to accomplishing today's rapid organizational change.

Because organizational identification is such a powerful concept, we believe that it is timely to disentangle organizational identification from the closely related concept of organizational commitment. In the following we will first present a commonly used measure of organizational identification and argue for the need for adapting this measure to more recent formulations of identification. We then describe the main concepts that have been distinguished in research on organizational commitment. Finally, we will present theoretical arguments and prior empirical evidence for the distinctiveness of identification and commitment. In an empirical study conducted in a underresearched part of the world, Nepal, we will provide evidence for our arguments.

Cheney's Organizational Identification Questionnaire scale

The OIQ was composed by Cheney (1982, 1983; Tompkins & Cheney, 1983) following Patchen's (1970) definition of identification and using selected items from six established instruments to assess organizational identification and organizational commitment. The resulting scale showed an excellent reliability of $\alpha = 0.95$ in the 25-item version in Cheney's (1983) study. Furthermore, factor analyses of the instrument showed 73% and 86% variance explained by the first factor for the 30-item version OIQ scale, and the revised 25-item version, respectively (Cheney, 1983). Based on these primary findings, most of the other studies have used the 25-item version as a unidimensional scale. Its reliability was reported to be $\alpha = 0.95$ by Bullis and Tompkins (1989), and $\alpha = 0.94$ by Sass and Canary (1991). However, an instrument with a high number of items has a greater likelihood of having a higher alpha coefficient than an instrument with fewer items (Nunnally, 1978). It is therefore not sufficient to refer to a high alpha to state a precise instrument. Previous research relied primarily on tests of internal reliability and rarely addresses the issue of its validity (cf. Barge & Schlueter, 1988; Miller *et al.*, 2000). Miller

et al. (2000) point to the fact that some studies found differences in the internal factor structure of the OIQ while others have neglected to examine the internal dimensionality. Furthermore, Miller *et al.* (2000; p. 626) summarize the criticism concerning the OIQ by saying that 'at least one study (Sass & Canary, 1991) indicates negligible empirical differences between the predictive validity of the OIQ and a commonly used organizational commitment measure'. This latter point is particularly important for the present analysis. The OIQ and commitment measures necessarily have to be confounded because Cheney (1983) drew some items of the first OIQ version directly from existing commitment instruments. However, for the assessment of organizational identification it seems worth disentangling the two concepts.

Taken together, the OIQ has been established as a commonly used instrument to obtain organizational identification. Because of an overlap between identification and organizational commitment, however, it is the first aim of the present study to revise the scale in order to have a measure to assess organizational identification without tapping into other concepts such as intentions, commitment, or involvement.

Organizational commitment

The roots of affective oriented organizational commitment can be traced back to the theory of Buchanan (1974) and its operationalization by Porter *et al.* (1974). Buchanan defined affective commitment as 'a partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of the organization, to one's role in relation to goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth' (p. 533). In the early years, organizational commitment research emerged in many approaches (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972; Wiener & Gechman, 1977; Mowday *et al.*, 1982), which were empirically synthesized by Meyer and Allen (1991) into affective, continuance, and normative components of a multidimensional organizational commitment concept.

Affective commitment consists of three components: emotional attachment, identification, and involvement. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue their organizational membership because they want to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Affective commitment is taken as a construct closely related to identification (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). Continuance commitment refers to the continued membership in an organization because of two main reasons: first, because of perceived costs of leaving the organization such as reduction in pay, pension, benefits or facilities, and second, due to the lack of alternative job opportunities (cf. Ritzer & Trice, 1969; Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972). Normative commitment means the internalized pressure or feeling of obligation to continue employment due to the work culture and other socially accepted norms (cf. Marsh & Mannari, 1977; Wiener & Gechman, 1977). Affective commitment has been found to be favorable for individual and organizational outcomes in terms of satisfaction, well-being, lower turnover, and higher productivity. Continuance commitment mostly is perceived to be unfavorable or negatively related to performance and other variables valued by the organization. Normative commitment has been found to be positively associated with organizational outcomes but to a much lower extent than affective commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Finally, attitudinal commitment is characterized by at least three factors: (i) a strong belief in and acceptance of the goals and values of the organization; (ii) the readiness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and (iii) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization (Mowday *et al.*, 1982). Attitudinal commitment focuses on the processes by which people come to think about their relationship with the organization. The findings reveal strong attitudinal commitment to be associated with desirable outcomes such as lower absenteeism and turnover (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990) and higher productivity (DeCotiis & Summers, 1987). However, the concept has also been

criticized because of methodological problems. For example, it was stated that some of the OCQ items are confounded with possible criteria (e.g. turnover intentions, cf. Allen & Meyer, 1990).

So far, we have discussed the most prominent and most commonly used forms of organizational commitment. These concepts are to some extent interrelated, most obviously in the case of affective and attitudinal commitment. A recent meta-analysis by Meyer *et al.* (2002) revealed an average correlation of $\rho = 0.88$ between these two concepts. Affective and normative commitment were substantially correlated as well ($\rho = 0.63$), whereas affective and continuance commitment ($\rho = 0.05$), normative and continuance commitment ($\rho = 0.18$) were only weakly related to each other.

Theoretical distinctiveness of organizational identification and commitment

A particular problem of theoretical and empirical work in the present domain is the frequent confusion of organizational identification with the concept of organizational commitment. Some theorists equate identification with commitment while others view these two as distinct concepts (cf. Wiener, 1982; Van Dick, 2001, 2004; Van Dick *et al.*, 2002; Van Knippenberg & Sleebos, unpubl. data, 2001). There are strong theoretical arguments for the latter position.

First, although there is a certain overlap between organizational commitment and identification, and affective commitment and organizational identification in particular, Ashforth and Mael (1989) theoretically differentiated the two concepts. According to them, organizational identification is self-referential or self-definitional, whereas commitment is not. Organizational identification contributes to the individuals' definition of 'Who am I?' and thus reflects 'the perception of oneness with or belongingness to an organization, where the individual defines him or herself in terms of the organization(s) in which he or she is a member' (Mael & Ashforth, 1992; p. 104).

Second, according to predictions by Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and particularly Self-Categorization Theory (Turner *et al.*, 1987) organizational identification is highly flexible and depends on the salience of the group and on the context of interactions with other groups (Wagner & Ward, 1993; cf. Pratt, 2001). In contrast, commitment is seen as an attitude, which, once established, is relatively stable and enduring.

Third, identification and commitment develop on the basis of different sources (Pratt, 1998). Identification is seen as contingent on the basis of perceived similarity and shared fate with the organization (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), while commitment develops because of exchange-based factors, such as the (material) relationship between the individual and the organization (cf. Tyler & Blader, 2000). Because of these differences in the development of commitment and identification, respectively, there are also differences in the possible outcomes of these concepts. Organizational members who are highly identified with their organizations will also think and act on behalf of their group's norms and values even if they are not formally forced to do so by work contracts or control mechanisms because they have incorporated these group norms and values into their self-concept. Committed individuals, on the other hand, are more guided by formal aspects of work descriptions and supervisor's control (cf. Pratt, 2000).

Finally, for developing a sense of commitment, there has to be actual exchange and affiliation between the individual and coworkers, supervisors, and, thus, the organization. In terms of the social identity approach, no interaction, affiliation, and not even a desire for affiliation in the future is necessary (Dutton *et al.*, 1994). From an identity point of view, one can imagine an employee who is working alone and far away from his or her organization but who is still highly identified with his or her organization.

Empirical evidence for the distinctiveness of organizational identification and commitment

Consistent with the theoretical arguments presented in the previous section, the concepts of commitment and identification have been found to be distinguishable empirically. There exist, however, only two studies known to us who have achieved this, one of them yet unpublished. Mael and Tetrick (1992) used scales for obtaining organizational identification in terms of shared experiences and shared characteristics between employee and organization and found correlations between these scales and organizational commitment and the OCQ (Mowday *et al.*, 1979) between 0.50 and 0.60. However, confirmatory factor analyses revealed better fits for models assuming different factors of identification and commitment than models assuming that both concepts go together in a single latent dimension. Van Knippenberg & Sleebos (unpubl. data, 2001) also distinguished identification from commitment in a questionnaire study. Affective commitment and organizational identification were correlated with $r = 0.67$ in a sample of 200 faculty members of a Dutch university. However, a confirmatory factor analysis assuming separate factors for the two concepts represented the data better than a model assuming only one single underlying factor.

Social and organizational context of the research

Most of existing research on commitment and identification has been conducted in North America and other economically developed countries. Few attempts have also been made to empirically test the usefulness of the concepts in collectivistic Asian countries. Investigating these well-established concepts in such underresearched parts of the world can help broaden our understanding of the underlying processes and mechanisms as well as the universalism of these concepts. Nepal is a landlocked country with a total population of 23.2 million. It is one of the least developed countries of the world being the 12th poorest country in the world and the poorest in South Asia. In the last two decades, average economic growth was found to be 2.2%. About 42% of the Nepalese population is living under the poverty line (World Bank, 2002). Nepal consists of more than 60 ethnic groups and is the only Hindu Nation in the world with 87% Hindu. Literacy rate of the total Nepalese population was observed to be 53.7% (CBS, 2002). There are some studies in Nepal that highlight the common attitudes and belief of Nepalese peoples. Agrawal (2001) provided some examples of widely held attitudes and beliefs among the Nepalese. He argued that time is not important for Nepalese people, pace of change is slow, there is lack of achievement orientation, and they believe in working for the government rather than the private sector. The overwhelming belief among Nepalese decision-makers is that the more power you hold, the more you are recognized in society (Adhikari, 2000). Adhikari (2000) characterized Nepalese human resources management as handicapped by the prevailing management norms and culture.

Method

Participants

Out of the 92 listed companies in Nepal, 10 companies were selected by chance and asked for participation in this study. After receiving the agreement of five companies (banks, telecommunication, and television broadcasting corporation), standardized questionnaires were printed and given to the heads of the respective human resources departments of each organization. Participation was voluntary and anonymous for each employee. The questionnaires were accompanied by a covering letter by the organizations, explaining the confidentiality and the

relevance of this research. Standardized questionnaires were filled out by 450 employees, which is a response rate of 92% of all questionnaires given to the organizations. Seventy-nine percent of respondents were male, the mean age was 33.6 years ($SD = 6.29$), 70% were married, 78% had graduated, and the mean professional experience was 9.47 years ($SD = 5.97$). Thus, the sample is very heterogeneous, representing a broad range of the Nepalese workforce, although not claiming to be representative for the whole population of Nepalese employees.

Questionnaire

Cheney's OIQ consisting of 25 items was adopted to assess organizational identification. The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) of Mowday *et al.* (1982) with 15 items was used to measure attitudinal commitment. The three-dimensional organizational commitment questionnaire consisting of six items for each dimension (AC, CC, and NC) by Meyer *et al.* (1993) was obtained to measure organizational commitment. A Nepalese version of the questionnaire consisting of these scales was given to the majority of the sample ($N = 365$), an English version was used in a smaller subsample ($N = 85$) because one organization insisted on an English version. Both the English and the Nepalese versions were cross-checked by a Nepalese language expert. A separate analysis (Gautam, 2002) revealed no important statistical differences in reliability and factor structure between the samples filling out the English and the Nepalese version, respectively. Participants had to indicate their agreement with each item on six-point Likert scales (endpoints: 1 = totally disagree, 6 = totally agree).

Results

Development of a short version of the OIQ

The OIQ showed a high reliability of $\alpha = 0.89$. An exploratory factor analysis of the 25 items produced six factors with more than 50% variance explained by the first factor. Even though the OIQ scale showed unidimensional property rather than being multidimensional, it was a second aim of the present article to develop an identification measure with less overlap to existing commitment instruments than the original OIQ. Therefore, a qualitative method was chosen to assess the content validity of each item by ratings of international identification researchers. The content analysis of the OIQ was conducted among 10 organizational identification researchers of Europe and America. A questionnaire with the 25 items of the OIQ was transferred via email to each scholar. They had to group each item into one of five possible categories: (i) affective identification; (ii) cognitive identification; (iii) evaluative identification; (iv) behavioral identification; and (v) 'others' (e.g. commitment, turnover intentions). Seven scholars took part in the study. Items, item characteristics, as well as results from the rater's assessments are provided in Table 1.

Eight items were found that were commonly agreed on by all raters. They recorded items 1, 11, and 20 under behavioral identification; items 5 and 17 under cognitive identification; and items 3, 8, and 13 under the affective identification category. All other items were either found to be ambiguous when having different ratings among the scholars, fell into the 'others' category (items 2, 16) or were rated as measuring a single dimension of identification by only one of the experts (items 7, 15, and 21).

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted by entering the commonly agreed eight items of the three categories. Results showed a unidimensional structure (Eigenvalue of 3.11 for the first

Table 1 Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ, Cheney, 1983), means, standard deviations, and dimensions of identification assessed by between raters

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Dimensions/ Agreement
1. *I would probably continue working for [organization] even if I did not need the money	4.06	1.76	Behavioral (3)
2. In general, the people employed by [organization] are working toward the same goals	4.43	1.56	–
3. *I am proud to be an employee of [organization]	5.24	1.02	Affective (5)
4. [Organization]'s image in the community represents me well	5.34	0.85	Cognitive Evaluative
5. *I often describe myself to others by saying 'I work for [organization]' or 'I am from [organization]'	5.28	1.02	Cognitive (4)
6. I try to make on-the-job decisions by considering the consequences of my actions for [organization]	5.68	0.75	Cognitive Behavioral
7. We at [organization] are different from others in our field	4.86	1.16	Cognitive (1)
8. *I am glad I chose to work for [organization] rather than another company	5.04	1.01	Affective (5)
9. I talk up [organization] to my friends as a great company to work for	4.81	1.23	Affective Evaluative Behavioral
10. In general, I view [organization]'s problems as my problems	5.33	4.06	Cognitive Affective
11. *I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help [organization] to be successful	5.60	4.43	Behavioral (5)
12. I become irritated when I hear others outside [organization] criticize the company	4.98	5.24	Affective Evaluative
13. *I have warm feelings toward [organization] as a place to work	5.07	5.34	Affective (5)
14. I would be willing to spend the rest of my career with [organization]	4.56	5.28	Affective Behavioral
15. I feel that [organization] cares about me	4.09	5.68	Affective (1)
16. The record of [organization] is an example of what dedicated people can achieve	3.99	4.86	–
17. *I have a lot in common with others employed by [organization]	4.34	5.04	Cognitive (2)
18. I find it difficult to agree with [organization]'s policies on important matters relating to me (R)	4.60	1.24	Affective Cognitive
19. My association with [organization] is only a small part of who I am (R)	4.42	1.36	Affective Cognitive
20. *I tell others about projects that [organization] is working on	4.24	1.60	Behavioral (3)
21. I find that my values and the values of [organization] are very similar	4.17	1.36	Cognitive (1)
22. I feel very little loyalty to [organization] (R)	5.07	1.19	Affective Cognitive
23. I would describe [organization] as a large 'family' in which most members feel a sense of belonging	4.01	1.56	Cognitive Affective
24. I find it easy to identify myself with [organization]	5.13	1.13	Affective Cognitive
25. I really care about the fate of [organization]	5.74	0.81	Affective Behavioral

*Indicated items used for the OIQ-Short Scale, numbers in the last column indicate absolute number of raters who rated the item as tapping the same dimension. (R), Items recoded for analyses.

factor and below 1.0 for the next factors). Variance accounted for by this single factor was 39% and all the factor loadings on the first factor were higher than 0.38.

In a next step, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to verify the results of the exploratory factor analysis. Unlike a principal components exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analyses specify a priori how many factors represent the underlying data and exactly which items load on which factors. In addition to providing the item-factor loadings, confirmatory factor analyses deliver indices that allow evaluating the underlying factor structure as a good or bad representation of the data. Moreover, with the help of these indices, different alternative models can be compared. By using the EQS-program, the following indices are provided: First the chi-squared value and chi-squared test of significance are indicators of the fit between the underlying structure and the data. A model fitting the data well should deliver a non-significant chi-squared test result. However, this test is highly dependent on sample size, and in samples as large as the one at hand, a significant result is very likely. Therefore, three other indicators (CFI, RMSEA, and chi-squared/d.f. ratio) are used to describe the models' goodness of fit. The CFI (comparative fit index; see Bentler, 1992 for exact formula) is less susceptible to difficulties associated with sample size effects than some other fit indices. In general, models with $CFI > 0.90$ are adequate. The RMSEA represents the average of the residuals of the fitted covariance matrix and should have a value below 0.10. Finally a ratio of chi-squared divided by the model's degrees of freedom (chi-squared/d.f) with a value of at least five, preferably two or three, is adequate (cf. Medsker *et al.*, 1994; for a summary and discussion of these and other methods of evaluating goodness of fit of structural equation modeling).

Three alternative models were tested: The first model replicates the results of the exploratory factor analysis and assumes all items to be explained by a single factor. The other two models assume three latent factors as representing the dimensions of identification (affective, cognitive, behavioral), in the second model as orthogonal, in the last model as an oblique solution with correlated factors. The set of results produced from the analysis with the unidimensional model showed substantial ($p < 0.05$) factor loadings ranging between 0.30 and 0.74 for each item. Results also showed a good model fit (chi-squared = 45.23, d.f. = 20, $p < 0.0001$; $CFI = 0.97$, $RMSEA = 0.05$). The results for the second model with three underlying factors showed a poor fit of the model ($CFI = 0.56$, $RMSEA = 0.19$). Furthermore, a three-factor correlated model was designed that was found to be of comparably good model fit (chi-squared = 34.41, d.f. = 17, $p < 0.01$; $CFI = 0.98$; $RMSEA = 0.05$) as the unidimensional model but with very high intercorrelations between the factors ($r > 0.80$). Thus, the unidimensional solution seems to represent the data best. The intercorrelations between the original OIQ, the short version, and the four commitment scales are provided in Table 2.

Cheney's (1982) original scale showed higher correlations with all other four major concepts – affective, continuance, normative, and attitudinal commitment – than the short version of the OIQ. The intercorrelations between Cheney's scale and the revised scale was $r = 0.90$. The differences in the correlation of these two scales with affective and attitudinal commitment scales were found to be highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Thus, Cheney's general organizational commitment concept overlaps with affective and attitudinal commitment concepts more than does the short version. Furthermore, reliability of the revised scale was $\alpha = 0.70$ and the confirmatory unidimensional model fits the data very well. Hence, it is evident that the proposed revised scale with eight items seems sufficiently reliable to assess organizational identification.

Table 2 Scale means, standard deviations, alphas, and inter-correlations

Scales	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Alpha	1	2	3	4	5
01. Affective Commitment	450	5.25	0.76	0.85	–				
02. Continuance Commitment	448	3.58	1.16	0.86	0.26	–			
03. Normative Commitment	450	4.76	0.95	0.81	0.65	0.39	–		
04. Organizational Identification OIQ, Cheney (1982)	450	4.80	0.66	0.89	0.70	0.33	0.67	–	
05. Organizational Identification (revised OIQ)	450	5.55	0.82	0.70	0.65	0.29	0.67	0.90	–
06. Attitudinal Commitment	448	4.73	0.68	0.82	0.66	0.25	0.60	0.80	0.70

All correlations are significant ($p < 0.01$).

Distinctiveness of organizational identification and organizational commitment

Again, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to test whether identification and organizational commitment aspects – affective, continuance, normative and attitudinal commitment – are distinct. Structural equation models were designed for each commitment component with both the 25-item scale and the revised version OIQ assuming: (i) a unidimensional model; (ii) two-factor orthogonal models; and (iii) two-factor oblique models. Results are reported in Table 3.

Fit indices produced by the revised version OIQ are significantly better than those by the original OIQ in all of the analyses. The two-factor correlated models are comparatively better over the other alternative models in each and every case. Models show chi-squared/d.f. ratios below 5, CFI's close to 0.90 and RMSEA's below 0.10 for the revised version of the OIQ. Moreover, the chi-squared differences between orthogonal and oblique models are significant ($p < 0.01$) in every case. Thus, compared to the original OIQ, the revised version of this scale seems more appropriate in terms of construct validity (i.e. more distinct from all commitment concepts). It can be concluded that organizational identification measured with the newly developed short scale is correlated to, but distinguishable from, organizational commitment.

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was twofold: First, to develop a short version identification scale, and second, to test whether identification and commitment are different concepts. Content analysis, exploratory factor analysis, and confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to construct a revised version of the Organizational Identification Questionnaire (OIQ). An eight-item scale was found to be a reliable measure to assess organizational identification of employees in organizations.

In confirmatory factor analyses, organizational commitment and identification were proven to be correlated but empirically distinctive. According to the theoretical arguments, the empirical distinctiveness refers to the fact that organizational identification is a merge of personal-self with organizational-self whereas commitment is more an attitude that ties employees to their

Table 3 Results of confirmatory factor analyses

Model	χ^2	d.f.	$\chi^2/\text{d.f.}$	CFI	RMSEA
1. Affective Commitment & Org. Identification					
(a) Solution with Cheney's (1982) OIQ					
i. Unidimensional	2075.13	434	4.78	0.71	0.09
ii. Orthogonal two factor	2116.01	434	4.88	0.70	0.09
iii. Oblique two factor	1835.01	433	4.24	0.75	0.09
(b) Solution with revised OIQ					
i. Unidimensional	433.25	77.00	5.63	0.84	0.10
ii. Orthogonal two factor	555.61	77.00	7.22	0.79	0.12
iii. Oblique two factor	302.15	76.00	3.98	0.90	0.08
2. Continuance Commitment & Org. Identification					
(a) Solution with Cheney's (1982) OIQ					
i. Unidimensional	2451.64	434	5.65	0.60	0.08
ii. Orthogonal two factor	1638.12	434	3.77	0.76	0.08
iii. Oblique two factor	1589.59	433	3.67	0.77	0.08
(b) Solution with revised OIQ					
i. Unidimensional	898.37	77.00	11.67	0.60	0.15
ii. Orthogonal two factor	383.01	77.00	4.97	0.85	0.09
iii. Oblique two factor	341.79	76.00	4.50	0.87	0.09
3. Normative Commitment & Org. Identification					
(a) Solution with Cheney's (1982) OIQ					
i. Unidimensional	1805.97	434	4.16	0.73	0.08
ii. Orthogonal two factor	1934.57	434	4.46	0.70	0.09
iii. Oblique two factor	1657.56	433	3.83	0.76	0.08
(b) Solution with revised OIQ					
i. Unidimensional	382.12	77.00	4.96	0.84	0.09
ii. Orthogonal two factor	597.44	77.00	7.76	0.73	0.12
iii. Oblique two factor	328.29	76.00	4.32	0.87	0.09
4. Attitudinal Commitment & Org. Identification					
(a) Solution with Cheney's (1982) OIQ					
i. Unidimensional	2823.14	740	4.32	0.69	0.08
ii. Orthogonal two factor	3375.07	740	4.32	0.61	0.08
iii. Oblique two factor	2809.01	739	4.32	0.69	0.08
(b) Solution with revised OIQ					
i. Unidimensional	744.70	230.00	3.24	0.82	0.07
ii. Orthogonal two factor	1193.47	230.00	5.19	0.67	0.10
iii. Oblique two factor	737.47	229.00	3.22	0.83	0.07

Bolded values indicate models with best fit to the data.

organization. Affective commitment and organizational identification are related substantially in the present study as well as in the previous work of Mael and Tetrick (1992) or Van Knippenberg & Sleebos (unpubl. data, 2001). These authors' results and our own results point to an average interrelation between these concepts of approximately $r = 0.65$, which is slightly lower than the correlation obtained by Riketta (in press). In his meta-analysis, Riketta found an average correlation of 0.79 between commitment and identification. However, Riketta argues that the shared variance of 62% between the concepts leaves room for an explanation of the remaining

38%. Our correlation reveals even more unshared variance between commitment and identification of more than 50%. Thus, both the clear results of confirmatory factor analyses as well as the correlations between the concepts support our view of commitment and identification as related but distinguishable concepts.

The present study has implications for academic purposes as well as for practitioners. Academically, this research assessed the construct validity of the commonly used OIQ and also attempted successfully to develop a shorter version of the scale. This study was found capable of differentiating identification from organizational commitment. The relatedness and distinctiveness of organizational identification and four commitment scales were explored. Although the present study has implications for future research, it must be acknowledged that results emerged from cross-sectional data generated in self-reported questionnaires. Both longitudinal studies as well as the measurement of the antecedents and consequences would be interesting and fruitful perspectives for future research.

What can managers gain from this knowledge? Cheney (1983; p. 342) stated that identifications 'aid us in making sense of our experience, in organizing our thoughts, in achieving decisions, and in anchoring the self. Perhaps most important to students of communication, identifying allows people to persuade and be persuaded.' Thus, it seems obvious that identification can help employees in organizations as well as organizations themselves to be better off in terms of well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. It flows directly from the findings of the present study that human resources policies and practices fostering commitment are not necessarily increasing identification because commitment and identification develop on different bases. Thus, practitioners should always ask themselves whether they want to increase commitment (and which forms of it) or identification. Managers will find specific measures to manage commitment, for example, in the overview of Meyer and Allen (1997). They can foster identification, for example, by implementing programs that strengthen feelings of corporate identity and that create a positive image of the organization as a whole (see Cole, 1989; Redhill, 1999; Jin, 2001; Van Knippenberg, 2003; for detailed suggestions).

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